ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND WORKFORCE NEEDS

The Council on Postsecondary Education reviews and approves new academic programs. It has delegated final approval for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System programs to its board and final approval for selected programs to the university boards. The Council conducts biennial reviews of the productivity of existing programs for all institutions. It works with postsecondary institutions to link new and existing academic programs to current and future community and workforce needs. It works closely with the Office for the New Economy and the Cabinet for Workforce Development to identify these needs.

Reviews of new and current programs center on the contributions of the program to the five questions that guide postsecondary reform.

> How well is the program linked to P-12 schools, community and technical colleges (for baccalaureate programs), and undergraduate programs (for graduate programs) to ensure an adequate number of well-prepared students? All programs are expected to meet the Council's program productivity requirements for degrees granted and credit hours generated.
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> How is the program supporting student retention and timely graduation?
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> How is student learning and program quality being assessed?
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> What are the opportunities for employment or postgraduate education for students after graduation?
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> How will the program and its graduates contribute to Kentucky's communities and economy?

The Council's review of programs also emphasizes collaboration among postsecondary institutions and with the Kentucky Virtual University. Collaboration can increase the efficiency and quality of programs. For example, courses common to an academic program offered at several institutions can be offered more frequently, to more students, and with less demand on faculty if institutions share responsibility for the courses through the KYVU. Also, each institution offering a program may not need to offer all of the courses required for a full program if they collaborate. The Council reviews proposals for new programs and justifications for existing programs using this systemwide perspective.

Since 1997, the Council has worked with the institutions to close or change over 300 academic programs. This has allowed reallocation of resources from closed programs and improved altered programs' ability to attract students and meet state needs. During this time the institutions have implemented 52 new academic programs. More than 90 percent of new programs directly address workforce needs in computing, technology, public protection, health, and education areas.

Questions Governing Board Members Might Ask

1. How do we know whether proposed academic programs are responsive to state needs?
2. What procedures are in place to promote collaboration between our institution and other public and independent institutions in Kentucky?
3. How are employers and other important external constituencies involved in the development of new academic programs?